U.S. Department of Education ~~**November 2002**~~**September 2003**

2003-2004 *No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program*
Cover Sheet

Name of Principal Ms. Alida Woods

Official School Name Isaac Dickson Elementary School

School Mailing Address 125 Hill Street

Asheville NC 28801-2545
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

Tel. (828) 255-5376 Fax (828) 255-5589

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I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Robert Logan

District Name Asheville City Schools Tel. (828) 255-5304

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board Chairperson Mr. John Legerton

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

PART II- DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:

5 Elementary schools
1 Middle schools
0 Junior high schools
1 High schools
1 Other (Briefly explain) Asheville City School Preschool (6 months to 4 years)
1 Alternative Middle School with a KIPP Academy and alternative High School
9 TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: $9,273.00

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: $6,748.00

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

[X] Urban or large central city
[ ] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
[ ] Suburban
[ ] Small city or town in a rural area
[ ] Rural

4. 6 months Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

   6 years If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
K	40	24	**64**	**7**			
1	27	41	**68**	**8**			
2	38	27	**65**	**9**			
3	37	28	**65**	**10**			
4	26	20	**46**	**11**			
5	24	20	**44**	**12**			
6				Other			
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →					352

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:

58 % White
28.4 % Black or African American
1.4 % Hispanic or Latino
1.4 % Asian/Pacific Islander
0.3 % American Indian/Alaskan Native
10.5 % Multi-racial
100% Total

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 17 %

(This rate includes the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	21
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	40
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	61
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	358
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.170
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: .099 %

2 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 2
Specify languages: German and Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 46%

162 Total Number Students Who Qualify

If this method does not produce a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 10%
    35 Total Number of Students Served

    Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

____Autism	____Orthopedic Impairment
____Deafness	____Other Health Impaired
____Deaf-Blindness	11 Specific Learning Disability
____Hearing Impairment	12 Speech or Language Impairment
4 Mental Retardation	____Traumatic Brain Injury
____Multiple Disabilities	____Visual Impairment Including Blindness
5 Behavior/Emotional	3 Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	2	
Classroom teachers	20	
Special resource teachers/specialists/ Counselor/Media	8	4
Paraprofessionals	11	
Support staff (Custodians, secretaries, child nutrition)	5	4
Total number	46	8

12. Average school student-"classroom teacher" ratio: 1:18

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	1998-1999
Daily student attendance	94.40%	95.00%	94.80%	95.10%	94.70%
Daily teacher attendance *	96.82%	96.13%	97.22%	97.10%	95.69%
Teacher turnover rate	6.9%	0%	14.60%	20.40%	12.00%
Student dropout rate					
Student drop-off rate					

*excluding professional leave and annual leave (children not in attendance)

PART III - SUMMARY

Our mission statement at Isaac Dickson indicates that "we are a partnership of parents, teachers, and community that help students do their best work, learn skills important to life, and celebrate the richness of cultural diversity." From our beginning in 1989, our school philosophy and instructional program have centered on the belief that children learn best by doing. We are a partner with the National Foxfire organization and our philosophy is built on the eleven Core Practices of the Foxfire way of teaching and learning. Instruction at Dickson focuses on an experiential approach to delivering the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Integrated units and project learning are the norm. Teachers use the community as a classroom, taking frequent field trips and utilizing guest speakers. This partnership between the school and the community is integral to the success of our instructional program. Students understand the connection between school and the real world.

Dickson is a part of the School Development Program from Yale University. We are guided by the principles of consensus, collaboration and no-fault. Our School Planning and Management Team creates and guides the implementation of the school improvement plan. Our Student Staff Support Team meets weekly to provide resources for children needing extra support. Our Parent Team assures that parents are involved in every level of school planning. Representatives from all grade levels participate in an active Student Council.

Our campus is located just a half a mile from downtown. We sit on seventeen acres of fields and wooded land. The campus includes extensive gardens, a nature trail, a sound garden and a pond/wetlands area and two playgrounds. Teachers and administrators have been very active writing grants to provide for these special projects. Our Title I funding has enabled us to hire a part time outdoor educator who incorporates environmental education with the Standard Course of Study. In 2000, we were named a High Performance School by the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation.

Title I dollars also provide funding for three part time tutors who offer extra classroom support for struggling students. Our remediation funding supports our Afternoon Adventures program which is an after-school homework/tutorial program that combines adventure learning with remediation.

We are a lead school in the state for Service Learning. A part of Learn and Serve America, we have facilitated system wide recycling and a number of other service learning projects including a partnership with the local food bank, creation of an African American Heritage community project, Literacy Through Photography projects, and our Classroom Without Walls career shadowing program. In 1999 we were awarded the Governor's Excellence in Education Award for Environmental Service Learning.

As a 2002 ASCD Lighthouse School, Isaac Dickson is a true community of learners. With 42% minority students and 46% on free/reduced lunch, we represent a microcosm of the community. At Dickson, parents teachers, and students "experience the difference!"

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Test Data Results: The General Assembly of North Carolina passed the ABC's of Public Education in 1995. All North Carolina students, grades three through eight, participate in a yearly assessment process for reading comprehension and mathematical understanding. The NC End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments provide two standards by which students are evaluated—growth and performance. Growth standards are

determined by the movement of students on a developmental scale score. The amount of movement or growth on this scale score shows if students in a school have learned as much as they are expected to learn in one year. Three levels of growth standards are determined from a state-generated formula: High Growth (110% growth in a year), Expected Growth (100% growth), and Expected Growth Not Achieved (less than 100% growth). **Isaac Dickson has made High Growth since the pilot year in May 1996.**

Performance standards detail the percent of students at or above grade level. Achievement levels are determined for each student. These levels (I, II, III, and IV) compare student and group performance to standards based on what is expected at each grade level. Level III represents proficiency and Level IV demonstrates performance beyond the current grade level. **Isaac Dickson has shown excellent performance growth during the past three years (see charts on pages 12-18).**

The North Carolina 3rd grade Pretest and 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade End-of-Grade test of Reading Comprehension demonstrate a student's proficiency as a reader—both decoding and comprehending. Phonics, meaning and syntax provide support as the child reads and understands new material in these assessments. Reading skills and vocabulary are assessed indirectly—through application and understanding of the passages and questions. The students read authentic passages and answer questions related to that passage. In 2003, a newly designed Reading Comprehension EOG assessed all students through four categories of multiple-choice questions—cognition (development of an initial understanding), interpretation (digging deeper for inferences, conclusions, and generalizations), critical stance (evaluating author's craft), and connections (text to text, text to self, text to world). This assessment is based on third, fourth, and fifth grade English Language Arts Goals and Objectives in the NC Standard Course of Study.

Reading scores at Isaac Dickson have continually increased at each grade level and for each subgroup, especially during the past three years. The performance of black students and economically disadvantaged students has increased steadily. **The Reading Composite Score for all Isaac Dickson students (3rd-5th grades) for 2003 was 94.1% proficient.**

The North Carolina 3rd grade Pretest and 3rd, 4th, and 5th, grade End-of-Grade Test of Mathematics consist of two parts—mathematics computation and mathematics application. The two-part test produces one mathematics score for each student. The *mathematics application* (calculator active) section assesses a student's ability to apply mathematical principles, solve problems, and explain mathematical processes. These problems pose a real life situation that the students at a particular grade level might encounter. The *mathematics computation* section (calculator inactive) is also written in story-problem format.

Math scores at Dickson have also increased during the past three years. **In 2003 the Mathematics Composite Score for all Isaac Dickson students (3rd-5th grades) was 97.3% proficient.**

2. Use of Assessment Data to Improve Student/School Performance: Three tools are used at Isaac Dickson to help teachers use academic and school climate data to understand and improve student and school performance: (a) Assessment notebook—Each 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teacher is provided a data notebook that relates to his/her new classroom before the school year begins. 1st and 2nd grade teachers receive student profile boxes that contain academic data from their students' previous school year. During grade level meetings, the data notebooks and profile boxes are reviewed with administrators. Third grade meetings are held after the reading and math pretest scores are received.

The notebooks contain the following data to assist teachers with an early understanding of their new classrooms: (1) list of new students with last year's developmental scale score and achievement levels for reading and math; Level I, II, II, and IV students are grouped in a list; (2) the Parent/Teacher End-of-Grade Report (from the previous school year) for each student detailing individual percentile scores for reading and math, mathematical strengths and weaknesses, and a Lexile score to direct guided reading or literature study group book choices for the beginning of the school year; on the back of the report the principal copied the Developmental Scale Score numbers for math and reading and placed a red X on the student's scale score from the previous year and a blue X on the number the student must grow to in order to be Level III or IV at the end of this current school year (this is a great visual representation of expected growth to share with parents); (3) scatter plot graph of all students in each classroom and their location

within Levels I, II, III, IV for math and reading; (4) student writing samples from the end of the previous year as a baseline for instruction; (5) for 4th grade teachers, copies of last year's state writing assessment student papers to search for patterns in student writing that might inform this year's teaching; (6) North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Publication—*Instructional Technique Matrix* with directions for specific instructional reading strategies and the NC Standard Course of Study for all subjects.

(b) Principal's Monitoring Notebook: A notebook is created for each grade level. The purpose of this notebook is to monitor the academic and behavioral progress made by each student in the school. The notebook contains: (1) Personalized Education Plans (PEP) for each student needing extra academic and/or behavioral support; (2) schedules for student with PEPs to ensure their day is not fragmented by tutors or extra help; (3) parent/teacher conference forms; (4) quarterly assessments in reading and math (analyzed by Standard Course of Study objectives); (5) regrouping of tutors to address changing academic needs; (6) teacher's daily schedules (for effective use of time); (7) notes from weekly grade level meeting that focus on the needs of specific children; and (8) lists of extra support provided for each child.

(c) Climate Survey: Academic data is very important, but the school also analyzed climate surveys from parents, staff, and students. These climate surveys have been conducted during May for the past three years by the School Development Program (Comer). Grouped topics from the survey were divided into scored areas—high score, median score, and needs attention. Teams were developed to study each area and develop suggestions for Dickson's School Planning and Management Team in order that climate within the school remain high and that the staff continue to work diligently on issues that required immediate attention. For example, staff members perceived parent involvement as low in May 2001. Plans were developed to address the issue through the Parent Team, School Planning and Management Team, the PTO, and the Family Resource Room on campus. During 2002 and 2003 major steps were taken to increase the perception of openness at the school for all members of the community. In November 2002, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools re-accreditation report stated, "The level of parental involvement and support was outstanding. Dickson Elementary has numerous volunteers on a daily basis, in addition to those working on special projects like the Family Room."

3. Communication of student performance to parents, students, and the community: The school year at Isaac Dickson begins with a "Meet the Teacher Day". Academic information relating to last year's performance on academic goals is provided to all parents in the "Annual Report: Asheville City Schools". This booklet shares all End-of-Grade proficiency scores with the community and parents. Also, parents, students, teachers, and administrators sign a contract on this day indicating a commitment by all stakeholders to help each student meet his/her academic goals.

A mandatory parent/teacher conference day is held half-way through the first quarter. During this conference teachers share the Parent/Teacher End-of-Grade report that summarizes last year's assessment results. A Personalized Education Plan is written by the teacher and the parent for all students needing extra academic or behavioral support, approximately 15% of the student body. This plan details specific, individualized instructional strategies that will support their child's needs. Students in grades one through five can attend this conference with their parents so they understand the work that must be accomplished during the school year.

Report cards (mid-term and each nine weeks) are mailed to the home of students with a Personalized Education Plan. The report cards detail each quarter's work and where the student is functioning within his/her specific grade. Parent/teacher conferences are offered after each report card.

A second mandatory parent/teacher conference day is held the first week in February. This conference allows teachers and administrators to share quarterly assessment results (EduTest and Test Magic) with parents. These assessments are analyzed and tutorial sessions are provided for all students who have not achieved mastery on the objectives stated in the NC SCS for English Language Arts and Mathematics.

A state report card is provided in October each year for all schools in the district. This report card is mailed to all stakeholders with a letter from the Superintendent and a copy of Dickson's Official Report.

4. How the School Will Share Successes With Other Schools: Isaac Dickson has led academic achievement in this school district for several years. The staff welcomes visitors from this system and other schools as far away as eastern North Carolina. Dickson hosted a team of teachers one day each month during the fall of 2002. The visitors observed the implementation of balanced literacy and they participated in the school's site-based professional development.

The principal, assistant principal and teachers have presented at state and national conferences to share the expertise of eleven National Board Certified teachers and how that expertise has changed the way children are educated at Isaac Dickson. Examples of presentations follow:

- North Carolina Association of School Administrators Summer Leadership Conference 2000-Principal's Data Notebook; 2002-Service Learning at Dickson
- NCASA Winter Conference 2002—Word Study Centers in First and Second Grade Classrooms
- Closing the Gap Conference, April 2002—Word Study Centers in First and Second Grade Classrooms
- North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (Mebane Scholars), July 2002-Word Study Centers; July 2003-Using Centers to Engage Children During Guided Reading

Awards have also been presented to the Isaac Dickson staff. Descriptions of our instructional strategies and creative parent events have been distributed to all state school systems and to schools at a national level as a result of these awards:

- Governor's Award of Excellence for Environmental Service Learning, 2001
- North Carolina Lighthouse Award, February 2002
- Listed as Case Study #2 in *Environment-based Education, Creating High Performance Schools and Students*, September 2000, published by The National Environmental Education and Training Foundation, Washington, DC
- Article in national PTA Magazine that detailed Isaac Dickson's multicultural events to welcome parents to Dickson for evenings of entertainment, Fall 2002

Staff members have published articles in national journals that detail specific instructional strategies at Isaac Dickson. These include:

- *Hey, What's That Old Chimney Over There?* by Alida Woods, serving as Assistant Principal, in The Active Learner, Spring 2001 (details a 5th Grade Foxfire project);
- *The Construct of Fostering a Major Pedagogical Change: The Implementation of Word Study Centers in First and Second Grade Classrooms*, by Vicki Dineen, a dissertation, May 2001.

The Isaac Dickson staff is committed to the experiential philosophy of teaching and learning. All staff members welcome the opportunity to share successful strategies.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Comprehensive Curriculum: North Carolina provides a Standard Course of Study for eighteen curriculum areas. The following description of Isaac Dickson's core curriculum is based on that course of study. With rigorous expectations, Isaac Dickson teachers engage their students through experiential learning. The learning expectations are based on high standards as evidenced from the state assessment results.

At Isaac Dickson, the youngest students (grades K-2) learn the foundation skills of literacy through direct instruction in decoding and comprehension strategies. Teachers model the use of specific strategies for both fluent reading and for reading comprehension. Students also improve their reading and writing skills through independent work each day. Our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students continue the process of learning basic reading and writing skills through strategic teaching. They develop the use of these literacy skills to learn the content material in other subject areas such as social studies, science, and the arts.

The math curriculum reflects the needs of Isaac Dickson students to live productively in an information-driven world. We want our K-5th grade students to acquire mathematical literacy, apply

mathematical skills in a technological world, be problem solvers, develop mathematical reasoning, and understand the "big idea" of mathematics. Our math curriculum is developed around four strands: (1) number sense, numeration, and numerical operations; (2) spatial sense, measurement, geometry; (3) patterns, relationships, and functions; and (4) data, probability, and statistics.

Our students learn social studies, science, art, and Spanish through integration of these areas into their reading, writing and math blocks. At Dickson this integration is often demonstrated through an "expert project" developed and judged for merit by the student, his peers, and several adults in the school. A rubric process assures all stakeholders that Dickson students are engaged in rigorous content learning through these experiential projects. For example, all fourth grade students spend three days on a coastal field trip to *Sound to Sea*. Before the trip, the students read many non-fiction and fiction texts related to this area of North Carolina. The rich historical literature provides many avenues for text study. They investigate the features of the coastal area (4th grade Social Studies objective), the adaptation of sea animals within their environment, oceanic systems (4th grade Science objectives), and the mathematical understanding necessary to finance a three-day trip for 60 students and 12 adults. During their stay at *Sound to Sea*, the fourth graders spend nine hours per day at various learning stations with expert instructors. The students choose appropriate topics for deeper research when they return. These "expert projects" are developed during the literacy and math blocks for several days. The art teacher and Spanish teacher are involved with the project at this point. Art and the use of technology are most often a major component of the project and final display. Dickson's Spanish teacher uses this as a way to teach interesting Spanish vocabulary. Additionally, she assists with specific projects that relate directly to the Second Language Standard Course of Study. At the conclusion of the study, each project is shared with individuals beyond the classroom. Some projects are stored for future use by other classrooms.

2. Reading Program: In 1997 Asheville City Schools' teachers, administrators, and an experienced consultant developed a comprehensive, balanced English Language Arts Program for district-wide implementation for grades K-5. This program was chosen as a vehicle through which the teachers in this district might implement the research-based strategies touted in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for English Language Arts, the Language Arts Standard provided by the National Council of Teachers of English (*Standards in Practice, K-12),* and International Reading Standard Position Statement. These associations and standards provide school practitioners with proven practices. Asheville City Schools, including Isaac Dickson, choose this reading program because it is based on all three scholarly works.

A description of Isaac Dickson's reading program can best be explained by asking four questions:

(1) What specific components take place in each classroom during the 90-minute literacy block?

- Teachers read aloud the best children's literature to model reading strategies; selected features of particular tests are emphasized;
- With shared reading the teacher reads the text to students and elicits participation from them at their level of comfort; the teacher uses the text to introduce or reinforce skills;
- Guided reading allows children a time to try out strategies for themselves in small groups while the teacher provides support as needed; the emphasis is on reading books of increasing difficulty;
- Independent reading during the school day allows children the time needed to apply the strategies they have learned; they read books that are less challenging than those used for guided reading.

(2) What strategies are taught during each of these components?

- Strategies that help readers sustain include phonemic awareness, explicit phonics instruction, solving words, monitoring/checking, predicting, maintaining fluency, and adjusting rate;
- Strategies that help readers comprehend include making connections (text to self, text to text, and text to world), visualizing, inferring, questioning, determining importance, synthesizing, and vocabulary development.

(3) What texts/printed materials are needed to support this program? (Taken into consideration is the cultural diversity of Dickson, our student's interest, and the range of difficulty in the books we choose.)

- Children's literature collections for literature study in classroom libraries and in a school book room;
- Leveled texts in a Guided Reading Room for the school;
- Basal reader anthology;
- Multiple copies of non-fiction magazines like *My Big Backyard, Time for Kids, and Click.*

(4) What management system is in place so the program works?

- Flexible small group instruction;
- Literature response journals;
- Integration of science and social studies into literature with project-based learning;
- Word Study Centers for phonics and Publishing Center for other projects.

3. Math Curriculum: Dickson's mathematics curriculum reflects the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics. The stated goal of developing mathematical power for all students directly promotes Dickson's mission to create an environment where children are filled with confidence and a lifelong love of learning. Dickson's students engage in learning experiences which focus on problem solving through teacher-selected worthwhile tasks, Standard One of the Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics.

Dickson's teaching staff has developed a very specific description of the attributes of worthwhile tasks. A worthwhile task is challenging, engaging, multi-leveled, set in meaningful context, addresses a cluster of objectives from the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, integrates curricula, and is free of bias. This description allows for planning learning experiences which celebrate the richness of cultural diversity through mathematics (major focus of the mission). For example, many books from a diverse collection of children's literature (including those authored by Dickson students) are used to inspire math lessons.

Dickson's teachers have also put into practice specific mathematical routines to promote mathematical power for all students. These routines include a daily focus on problem solving, problem solving journals, spatial visualization, mental mathematics, and ongoing computational games like Twenty-four, Krypto, Question of the Day, What's My Rule?, and Today's Number. These computational activities have become a routine part of the school day for children at each grade level, K-5. The focus on using worthwhile tasks and incorporating these routines has created a learning environment, reflective of our mission and vision, where all children are truly part of a larger learning community, where they experience success and learn skills important to life.

4. Instructional Methods: The instructional methods at Isaac Dickson match our magnet theme—experiential education. The school's teaching methods are guided by a belief that "learning by doing" is the foundation of problem solving and critical thinking skills. At Dickson, field trips, project-based learning and "Classroom without Walls", a school-to-work initiative, enhance the students' magnet studies. As an example, a first/second grade classroom studied the sun and its effect on the earth. After research through guided reading of non-fiction literature on the sun and its energy, the class created and used a solar oven. They successfully baked chocolate chip cookies on their patio table after several cloudy days. In an August Parent Newsletter, four students wrote, "Solar Oven: We used cardboard, aluminum foil, glue, and black paper, plastic and a piece of wood to build a solar oven. We are going to make cookies with it, but it has been too cloudy so far. The sun will reflect off of the aluminum foil to heat the cookies. Then we will eat them!" These young students will forever have an understanding of the sun's energy.

Small group instruction for mastery has become institutionalized at Dickson during the past four years. After studying our academic data in 2000, it was apparent that we needed additional certified teachers for small group instruction throughout the reading, writing, and math blocks. Multiple small-groups for

reading, writing, and math instruction can be observed throughout the school day in the classrooms, in the hallways, or in the media center. We teach to mastery, always re-teaching that which has not been mastered. The teach/assess/re-teach cycle (with the assessment mirroring the state assessments) complements our hands-on learning philosophy by providing our students with both real world learning and a vehicle for successful transition to paper and pencil tasks like the NC End-of-Grade Assessments.

Extended Day is available for students who need additional time for mastery of the goals and objectives on the NC SCS. Reading and math skills are reviewed along with building test taking skills. A 30-minute visit to the Pearson Lab for additional math practice ends each extended day session.

In summary, multiple instructional methods are used at Dickson including direct instruction, small group instruction, teacher modeling, and independent reading, writing, and math during the school day with the support of many certified teachers—not just one classroom teacher. In order to reach all students, multiple methods of instruction are mandatory.

5. Professional Development and Its Impact on Improving Student Achievement: Tony Wagnor wrote in Education Week (11/12/03) that a school strengthens instruction if "professional development is primarily on site, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, and is designed and led by educators who model the best teaching and learning practices" (p. 3). Isaac Dickson's professional development mirrors this description. In November 2002, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools provided a commendation to this school by stating in their report, "The school has an exemplary school-based staff development program focused on improving student achievement" (p.4). This peer reviewed, on-site visit along with Dickson's academic test scores provide evidence that our professional development plan is focused on improved student achievement.

Improving literacy was the first step for Isaac Dickson. The following plan was implemented:

- Monthly grade level meetings on-site with a literacy expert to implement Asheville City Schools' Language and Literacy program to the "institutionalized stage" (1998-2003);
- Focus groups for in-depth literacy study led by administrators and the literacy consultant
    1. 2000-02 Word Study Centers for first and second grade teachers;
    2. 2002-04 Debbie Miller's work, *Reading With Meaning* focus study group with first and second grade teachers;
    3. 2002-04 Stephanie Harvey/Anne Goudvis' work, *Strategies That Work* focus study group with 4th grade teachers (reading comprehension scores low in May 2001);
    4. 2001-04 Writing Instruction Training for third grade teachers;
    5. 2003-04 R*eading With Meaning* focus study group for 3rd grade teachers;
    6. 2002-04 Integration of Social Studies and Science into the Literacy Block for 5th grade;
    7. On-going narrative writing training for all staff members.

Dickson's teaching staff has participated in on-going staff development sessions for mathematics instruction for the past three years. These sessions have included reading parts of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics, writing journal reflections related to this reading and classrooms experiences, and sharing the reflections during grade level meetings with the mathematics consultant. The consultant has also provided the following: specific worthwhile tasks related to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NC SCS); guides aligning the resources used with the NC SCS; and an extensive resource binder for each teacher. Many of Dickson's staff have also reached out to other teachers in Asheville City Schools by modeling and sharing their expertise. Dickson's math scores on End-of-Grade assessments began to soar in May 2001, immediately after the inclusion of math as a professional development focus.

Along with this staff development, career status teachers at Dickson have been evaluated through an alternative process. Their evaluation has been based on self-selected strategies for instructional improvement—always aligned with the professional development offered on site. For example, the school had a significant increase (determined from a research project) in pretest and posttest reading scores for third graders after the implementation of Word Study Centers in first and second grade

classrooms. A two-year professional development process aligned with the teachers' alternative evaluation system allowed eight teachers to foster a major pedagogical change at Dickson through practitioner research.

Dickson's professional development has been teacher-led for six years. The teachers have continually altered and refined this learning process. Additionally, eleven teachers at Isaac Dickson have received their National Board Certification. Two teachers are in the process this year. The percentage of National Board Certified Teachers at Dickson (39% of the teaching staff) attests to the commitment these teachers have for lifelong learning. Their exceptional learning capacity reflects their exceptional teaching.

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PART VI – ASSESSMENT DATA

The following assessment data detail third, fourth and fifth grade reading and mathematics composite scores from May 2001 to May 2003 for Isaac Dickson Elementary School. Isaac Dickson's reading and math composite scores have consistently risen during the past three years. The following charts demonstrate that progress:

Reading Composite Scores for Isaac Dickson-Percent of Proficient Students

	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
All Students	94.1%	86.1%	78.5%

Mathematics Composite Scores for Isaac Dickson-Percent of Proficient Students

	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
All Students	95.4%	85.8%	86.7%

North Carolina's exemption policy for exceptional children was dramatically altered during the 2001-02 school year. There were no children exempt in May 2002 and 03. This creates a statistical anomaly noticeable on some of the grade level and subgroup charts that follow because Isaac Dickson was a cluster school for exceptional children for the district until August 2002. All autistic children in the school district and eight behaviorally/emotionally disabled children attended school at Dickson. Some of the May 2002 data reflect a dip in scores from the previous year (as does Mathematics in the chart above) due to the policy change and the high percentage of exceptional children assigned to Dickson, but no longer exempt. The impact was so great for Isaac Dickson that the superintendent relocated some classrooms for the 2002-03 school year. Therefore, demonstrating growth for all grade levels and all subgroups is a statistical challenge for school districts in North Carolina because our accountability rules have changed dramatically during the past three years. This is especially true for exceptional children cluster schools.

A break-out of student percentages for Level IV and Level III (Total Students, Free, and Reduced Lunch Students) is included for the past three years in the charts that follow. The state reports used for this information separate the Free percentages and the Reduced percentages when specific performance levels are requested. Also AAAI scores for exceptional children **are not included** in these detailed reports for either break out group-total or F/R. Therefore, the percentages of separated Level IV and Level III (Free and Reduced percentages and Total Students) **cannot** be compared with totals for either group.

Isaac Dickson stakeholders proudly present the following statistical information for your review.

5. Criterion-Referenced Tests

Test: North Carolina End-of-Grade Assessment — Grade: **3rd Grade Reading**

Edition/publication year: Updated Annually — Publisher: NCDPI

Testing Month	2002-03 May	2001-02 May	2000-2001 May	1999-2000 May	1998-1999 May

NUMBER/PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED

Number of Students Tested	64	53	57	48	57
Number of White Students Tested	33	30	35	-	-
Number of Black Students Tested	21	17	17	-	-
Number of Free/Reduced Students Tested	28	26	22	-	-
Percent of Total Students Tested	100%	98.1%	96.6%	92.3%	87.7%
Number of Students Excluded	0	1	2	4	8
Percent of Students Excluded	0	1.9%	3.4%	7.6%	12.3%

SCHOOL SCORES

TOTAL (THIRD GRADE) At or Above Proficient	**93.8%**	**81.1%**	**82.5%**	**72.9%**	**75.4%**
Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	64.06%	55.32%	50.88%	-	-
Total At Proficient (Level III)	29.69%	36.17%	31.58%	-	-

SUBGROUP SCORES

1. White (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	100% (33 of 33)	93.8% (30 of 33)	97.1% (34 of 35)	80.9%	96.2%
2. Black (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	85.7% (18 of 21)	52.9% (9 of 17)	47.1% (8 of 17)	64.0%	53.6%
3. Free/Reduced (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	85.7% (24 of 28)	69.2% (18 of 26)	63.6% NA	65.6%	NA
4. Free Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	28.6%	30%	20%	-	-
5. Free Total At Proficient (Level III)	57.1%	50%	40%	-	-
6. Reduced Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	No Reduced	0% (0 students)	50% (1 student)	-	-
7. Reduced Total At Proficient (Level III)	No Reduced	100% (2 students)	50% (1 student)	-	-

STATE SCORES (Total)

1. White At or Above Proficient	87.9%	86.2%	84.9%	83.1%	82.1%
2. Black At or Above Proficient	68.8%	64.9%	61.5%	58.5%	57.6%
3. Free/Reduced At or Above Proficient	69.4%	66.2%	63.6%	NA	NA

5. Criterion-Referenced Tests

Test: North Carolina End-of-Grade Assessment — Grade: **3rd Grade Math**

Edition/publication year: Updated Annually — Publisher: NCDPI

Testing Month	2002-03 May	2001-02 May	2000-2001 May	1999-2000 May	1998-1999 May

NUMBER OF STUDENTS TESTED

Number of Students Tested	64	53	56	48	57
Number of White Students Tested	33	31	34	-	-
Number of Black Students Tested	21	16	17	-	-
Number of Free/Reduced Students Tested	28	26	22	-	-
Percent of Total Students Tested	100%	98.1%	94.9%	92.3%	87.7%
Number of Students Excluded	0	1	3	4	8
Percent of Students Excluded	0%	1.9%	5.1%	7.4%	12.3%

SCHOOL SCORES

Total (THIRD GRADE) At or Above Proficient	**96.9%**	**79.2%**	**82.1%**	**62.5%**	**68.4%**
Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	56.25%	48.0%	50.0%	-	-
Total At Proficient (Level III)	40.63%	36.0%	39.29%	-	-

SUBGROUP SCORES

1. White (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	100% (33 of 33)	93.8% (29 of 31)	100% (34 of 34)	90.5%	96.2%
2. Black (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	90.5% (19 of 21)	50.0% (8 of 16)	41.2% (11 of 17)	44.0%	39.3%
3. Free/Reduced (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	92.9% (26 of 28)	65.4% (17 of 26)	59.0% NA	43.7%	NA
4. Free Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	26.6%	18.2%	10.0%	-	-
5. Free Total At Proficient (Level III)	75.0%	50%	45%	-	-
6. Reduced Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	No Reduced	0%	0%	-	-
7. Reduced Total At Proficient (Level III)	No Reduced	100% (2 students)	100% (2 students)	-	-

STATE SCORES (Total)

1. White At or Above Proficient	92.6%	85.9%	84.0%	76.2%	80.1%
2. Black At or Above Proficient	76.5%	58.1%	54.2%	43.7%	49.9%
3. Free/Reduced At or Above Proficient	78.6%	62.9%	59.4%	NA	NA

5. Criterion-Referenced Tests

Test: North Carolina End-of-Grade Assessment — Grade: **4th Grade Reading**

Edition/publication year: Updated Annually — Publisher: NCDPI

Testing Month	2002-03 May	2001-02 May	2000-2001 May	1999-2000 May	1998-1999 May

NUMBER OF STUDENTS TESTED

Number of Students Tested	45	53	47	46	36
Number of White Students Tested	28	28	25	-	-
Number of Black Students Tested	12	17	19	-	-
Number of Free/Reduced Students Tested	17	21	27	-	-
Percent of Total Students Tested	100%	100%	94.0%	88.4%	83.7%
Number of Students Excluded	0	0	3	6	7
Percent of Students Excluded	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%	11.5%	16.3%

SCHOOL SCORES

Total (FOURTH GRADE) At or Above Proficient	**91.1%**	**88.7%**	**65.9%**	**78.3%**	**75.0%**
Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	69.23%	56.86%	34.04%	-	-
Total At Proficient (Level III)	30.77%	35.29%	31.91%	-	-

SUBGROUP SCORES

1. White (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	96.6% (28 of 28)	96.5% (28 of 28)	92.0% (23 of 25)	100%	100%
2. Black (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	75.0% (9 of 12)	76.5% (13 of 17)	31.6% (6 of 19)	47.1%	50.0%
3. Free/Reduced (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	88.2% (15 of 17)	76.2% (16 of 21)	44.4% NA	54.5%	NA
4. Free Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	35.7%	5.3%	12.5%	-	-
5. Free Total At Proficient (Level III)	64.3%	73.7%	29.2%	-	-
6. Reduced Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	No Reduced	100% (1 student)	33.3% (1 student)	-	-
7. Reduced Total at Proficient (Level III)	No Reduced	0%	33.3% (1 student)	-	-

STATE SCORES (Total)

1. White At or Above Proficient	88.5%	84.6%	83.8%	81.6%	80.8%
2. Black At or Above Proficient	70.6%	59.7%	57.4%	53.6%	53.0%
3. Free/Reduced Lunch At or Above Proficient	70.3%	62.3%	60.0%	NA	NA

5. Criterion-Referenced Tests

Test: North Carolina End-of-Grade Assessment — Grade: **4th Grade Math**

Edition/publication year: Updated Annually — Publisher: NCDPI

Testing Month	2002-03 May	2001-02 May	2000-2001 May	1999-2000 May	1998-1999 May

NUMBER OF STUDENTS TESTED

Number of Students Tested	45	51	47	46	35
Number of White Students Tested	29	27	25	-	-
Number of Black Students Tested	12	17	19	-	-
Number of Free/Reduced Students Tested	17	21	27	-	-
Percent of Total Students Tested	100%	96.2%	94.0%	88.4%	81.4%
Number of Students Excluded	0	2	3	6	8
Percent of Students Excluded	0.0%	3.8%	6.0%	11.6%	18.6%

SCHOOL SCORES

Total (FOURTH GRADE) At or Above Proficient	**93.3%**	**90.0%**	**89.4%**	**84.8%**	**77.1%**
Total Above Proficient(Level IV)	95.24%	54.00%	46.81%	-	-
Total At Proficient (Level III)	2.38%	38.00%	51.06%	-	-

SUBGROUP SCORES

1. White (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	100% (29 of 29)	100% (27 of 27)	96.0% (25 of 25)	96.2%	100%
2. Black (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	75.0% (9 of 12)	70.6% (12 of 17)	84.2% (18 of 19)	70.6%	55.6%
3. Free/Reduced (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	88.2% (15 of 17)	76.2% (16 of 21)	81.5% NA	72.7%	NA
4. Free Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	87.5%	10.5%	12.5%	-	-
5. Free Total At Proficient (Level III)	6.3%	68.4%	70.8%	-	-
6. Reduced Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	No Reduced	0%	0%	-	-
7. Reduced Total At Proficient (Level III)	No Reduced	100% (1 student)	100% (1 student)	-	-

STATE SCORES (Total)

1. White At or Above Proficient	95%++	93.1%	93.0%	91.1%	89.6%
2. Black At or Above Proficient	86.9%	77.1%	74.8%	70.7%	68.2%
3. Free/Reduced At or Above Proficient	86.8%	79.7%	77.9%	NA	NA

5. Criterion-Referenced Tests

Test: North Carolina End-of-Grade Assessment — Grade: **5th Grade Reading**

Edition/publication year: Updated Annually — Publisher: NCDPI

Testing Month	2002-03 May	2001-02 May	2000-2001 May	1999-2000 May	1998-1999 May

NUMBER OF STUDENTS TESTED

Number of Students Tested	44	45	40	36	36
Number of White Students Tested	29	24	25	-	-
Number of Black Students Tested	8	16	12	-	-
Number of Free/Reduced Students Tested	15	22	16	-	-
Percent of Total Students Tested	100%	97.8%	93.0%	92.3%	90.0%
Number of Students Excluded	0	1	3	3	4
Percent of Students Excluded	0.0%	2.2%	7.0%	7.7%	10.0%

SCHOOL SCORES

TOTAL (FIFTH GRADE) At or Above Proficient	**97.7%**	**88.9%**	**87.5%**	**77.8%**	**91.7%**
Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	76.74%	55.0%	62.5%	-	-
Total At Proficient (Level III)	23.26%	45.0%	25.0%	-	-

SUBGROUP SCORES

1. White (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	100% (29 of 29)	92.3% (24 of 24)	100% (25 of 25)	94.7%	96.4%
2. Black (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	87.5% (7 of 8)	81.3% (13 of 16)	64.3% (8 of 12)	58.8%	75.0%
3. Free/Reduced (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	93.3% (14 0f 15)	81.8% (18 of 22)	68.7% NA	58.8%	NA
4. Free Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	46.2%	26.7%	26.7%	-	-
5. Free Total At Proficient (Level III)	53.8%	73.3%	40.0%	-	-
6. Reduced Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	100% (1 student)	33.3% (1 student)	0%	-	-
7. Reduced Total At Proficient (Level III)	0%	66.6% (2 students)	100% (1 student)	-	-

STATE SCORES (Total)

1. White At or Above Proficient	92.2%	90.0%	89.7%	87.0%	83.9%
2. Black At of Above Proficient	77.2%	70.7%	69.2%	63.7%	59.5%
3. Free/Reduced Lunch At or Above Proficient	77.1%	71.8%	70.7%	NA	NA

5. Criterion-Referenced Tests

Test: North Carolina End-of-Grade Assessment — Grade: **5th Grade Math**

Edition/publication year: Updated Annually — Publisher: NCDPI

Testing Month	2002-03 May	2001-02 May	2000-2001 May	1999-2000 May	1998-1999 May

NUMBER OF STUDENTS TESTED

Number of Students Tested	43	44	40	35	36
Number of White Students Tested	28	25	25	-	-
Number of Black Students Tested	8	14	12	-	-
Number of Free/Reduced Students Tested	15	20	16	-	-
Percent of Total Students Tested	97.7%	95.6%	93.0%	89.7%	90.0%
Number of Students Excluded	1	2	3	4	4
Percent of Students Excluded	2.3%	4.4%	7.0%	10.3%	10.0%

SCHOOL SCORES

TOTAL (FIFTH GRADE) At or Above Proficient	**95.3%**	**88.6%**	**90.0%**	**77.1%**	**91.7%**
Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	85.71%	73.17%	67.50%	-	-
Total At Proficient (Level III)	11.90%	21.95%	32.50%	-	-

SUBGROUP SCORES

1. White (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	100% (28 of 28)	92.6% (25 of 25)	100% (25 of 25)	94.4%	100%
2. Black (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	75.0% (6 of 8)	78.6% (11 of 14)	78.6% (8 of 12)	58.8%	62.5%
3. Free/Reduced (Percent) At or Above Proficient (Number)	86.7% (13 0f 15)	80.0% (16 of 20)	75.0% NA	52.9%	NA
4. Free Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	53.9%	46.8%	26.7%	-	-
5. Free Total At Proficient (Level III)	38.5%	40.0%	46.7%	-	-
6. Reduced Total Above Proficient (Level IV)	100% (1 student)	66.6% (2 students)	0%	-	-
7. Reduced Total At Proficient (Level III)	0%	33.3% (1 student)	100% (1 student)	-	-

STATE SCORES (Total)

1. White At or Above Proficient	94.8%	92.7%	92.5%	89.5%	89.3%
2. Black At of Above Proficient	83.1%	76.6%	75.0%	69.5%	68.3%
3. Free/Reduced Lunch At or Above Proficient	83.6%	78.6%	77.2%	NA	NA